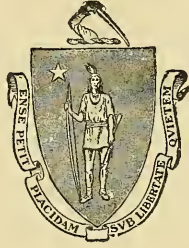


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THE COUNTRY CHURCH

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Taft, A. B. The tent mission

Taylor, G. Basis for social evangelism with rural applications

Wells, G. F. An answer to the New England country church question.

Wells, G. F. What our country churches need

Wilson, W. H. The church and the transient

Wilson, W. H. Conservation of boys


Wilson, W. H. The country church

Wilson, W. H. The country church program

Wilson, W. H. Don't breathe on the thermometer

Wilson, W. H. The farmers' church and the farmers' college

Wilson, W. H. Getting the worker to church



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Wilson, W. H. The girl on the farm

Wilson, W. H. How to manage a country life
institute

Wilson, W. H. "Marrying the land."

Wilson, W. H. No need to be poor in the country

Wilson, W. H. Synod's opportunity

Wilson, W. H. What limits the rural Evangel

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The church and country life. Pamphlet issued
by the Board of Home Missions of the Presby-
terian Church.

THE CHURCH AND COUNTRY LIFE



BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE U. S. A.
156-5TH AVE. NEW YORK

CHURCH and COUNTRY LIFE



THE RURAL CHURCH

In some great day
The Country Church
Will find its voice
And it will say:

“I stand in the fields
Where the wide earth yields
Her bounties of fruit and grain;
Where the furrows turn
Till the plowshares burn
As they come round and round
again:
Where the workers pray
With their tools all day
In sunshine and shadow and rain.

“And I bid them tell
Of the crops they sell
And speak of the work they have
done:

I speed everyman
In his hope and plan
And follow his day with the sun:
And grasses and trees,
The birds and the bees
I know and feel ev’ry one.

“And out of it all
As the seasons fall
I build my great temple alway;
I point to the skies,
But my footstone lies
In commonplace work of the day;
For I preach the worth
Of the native earth—
To love and to work is to pray.”

LIBERTY H. BAILEY

The report of the Executive Commission at the last General Assembly and the discussion following it, brought the Department of Church and Country Life noticeably before the Church at large. Many are seeking knowledge of this work. To these we commend the following articles. Each is contributed by one who is working, or who has worked during the past year, under the Department. Taken together they give an accurate sketch of several lines of the Board of Home Missions, country life work.

Religious Leadership of the Farmer

WARREN H. WILSON

IN the past the farmer built the churches, inspired the ministers and initiated the revivals. The forms of all American religious movements, till the days of Christian Science, and Dowieism, have been rural.

Until now a great majority of the ministry, and of the leading laymen, are country born and bred. This was natural in those times. There is no promise in it that the future religious leadership will be rural. The country church was first, because the farm preceded the store, the mill or the factory. The oldest churches in the cities were usually founded by farmers, before the growth of cities. These old rural foundations were the mothers of churches. The membership of mother church and branches was recruited, as the city grew, from rural congregations.

The forms of rural life, moreover, prevail in city congregations. Little has the city done to modify the country type. Elders and deacons still rule the churches on the avenue; as they led the village congregation. The minister still labors, as a rule, without assistants, because in the country he needs none. What was serviceable in the country still has to do in the city church: because the membership continue to think of religion in terms of the country, where they got their profoundest religious impressions.

The city has not been a fertile field of religious experience, as the country has. It has embodied few new ideals, as yet, in adequate church forms, but is still following the lead of men who thought and wrote in peaceful scenes, where family life was complete in itself, and the individual, not society, wrote the philosophy of life.

This leadership has passed from the country. In its place the country church, except in some of the old, eastern states, is frequently struggling for mere survival. Its highest ideal is now often narrow because of the economic poverty of the country, and because of the exodus which has exhausted rural society. Often the people are discouraged, because theirs is the toil, and to others belong the gains, of producing wealth. They are few in number. Each census records the astounding rate of national increase; but of late each decade discloses a rural decline. Occupations, even more

than men, have left the country. Nearly all the trades are moved from rural shops to city factories. Only the working farmer has been left, generally, in the country. Religion does not thrive among a diminished people, to whom others dictate prices, whose sole prevailing occupation has undergone depression for three successive decades. The story of the struggle of the rural church for survival, in the great agricultural states, is told elsewhere in this issue.

Now has come a time of rural revival. For twenty years farmers have been struggling for a better country life. The other occupations, once rural, have given no assistance. Merchants, bankers, manufacturers, lawyers, doctors, even ministers, have been engrossed with the building of cities. In "boom" times the farmer has had to fight even for his homestead. The church and school alone have stayed with him and suffered with him. Twenty years, whose history will some day be written in heroic letters!

For five years this struggle has commanded national attention. It's beginning to win. These five years have been marked by the leadership of educators and ministers. The country movement is a teaching and a prayer. It has found its pedagogues and its priests. Rural hymns are written and inspired men, dedicating their lives to the country, have become prophets of a new order.

There is a general agreement among those who lead in this work for country life that it will win only when it becomes a religious movement. These leaders are godly men and women,—almost all taught in the churches, with homely, simple faith. They believe that God is the Provider. Some of them have been poor, and they know what it is to pray for daily bread, for a job, for an income to feed and clothe a family. They naturally think of the farmer as God's hired man, a provider like God Himself. They long for a religious motive power, given by the Holy Spirit, to arouse the farmer as a national leader, and inspire him as a servant of the commonwealth. Ministers of all denominations, in the country, have been quick to catch this inspiration and powerful in communicating it.

The signs of this revival of rural leadership in things of the spirit are many. One of them is the unusual interest in rural institutions as centers of inspiration. The church and the school have become the centers of a new rural evangel. A larger idea of God is preached from many pulpits. Pages of the Bible, long omitted from reading, are filled with meaning. Conferences and Institutes on rural matters use Scriptural language, and return to Scriptural ideals with profound satisfaction. If the American and the Protestant, instead of the immigrant from southeastern Europe, shall win in the struggle for satisfactory life on American soil, it will be through this religious awakening. Only as a religious experience can the American change his heart from

the love of money to the love of the land God has given him. Jews, and Poles and Italians—as Swedes and Germans before them—have shown that they love land better than money. Those who shall own the land shall build the churches. Those who build the churches in the country will determine the religion of the whole people

I believe that our churches, of the Protestant type, will win in this great revival, that they will retain sufficient numbers of their people in the country to evangelize those who shall come and that, strengthened by this struggle, and brought near to the Almighty Spirit by victory over poverty, discouragement and depletion, they will learn new lessons in the divine obedience

Complexion of the Country Church Field

LOIS NEFF

THE first purpose of the Department of Church and Country Life is to serve the churches which minister to the farmer. In order to fill this purpose we must know how many of our churches perform such a service.

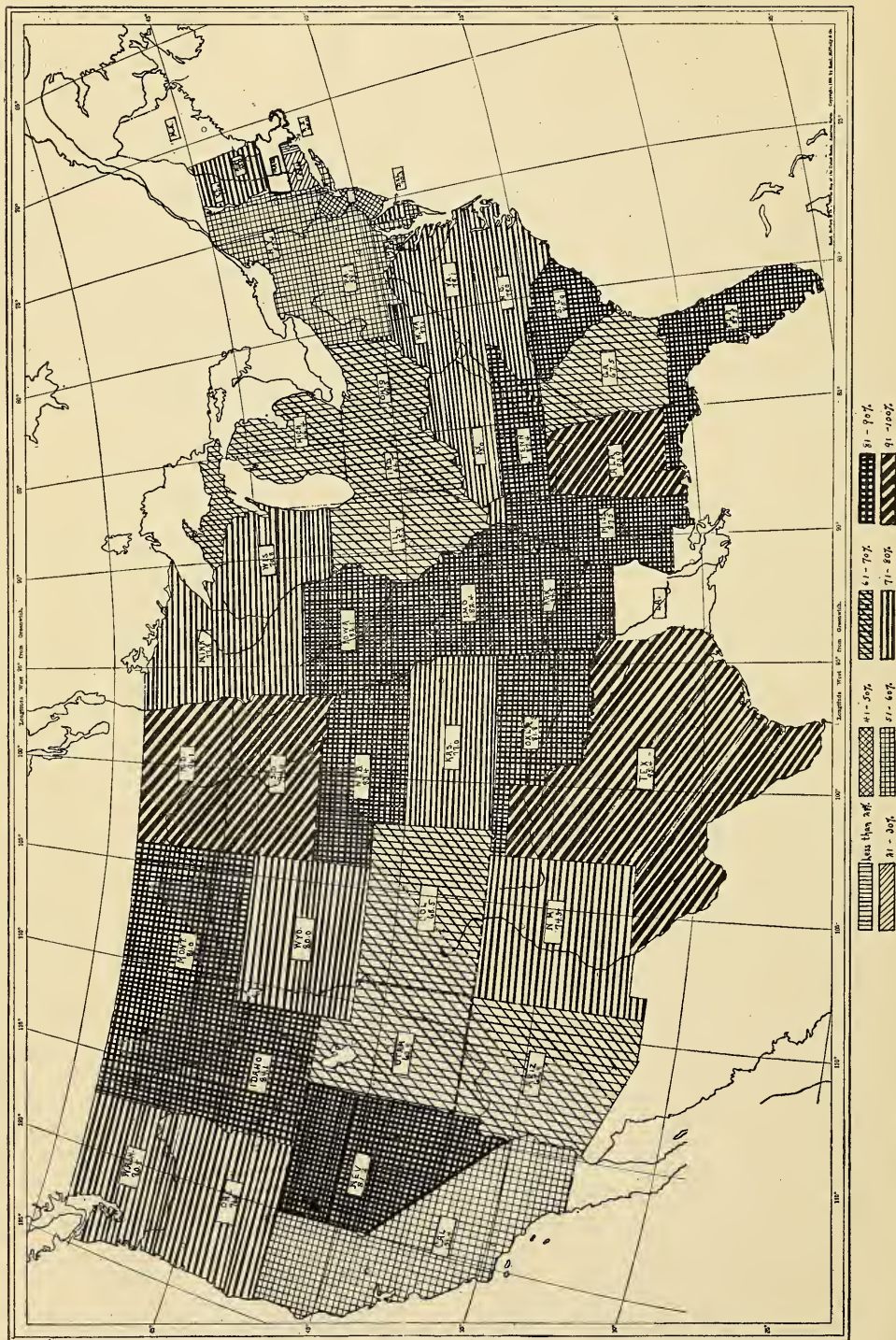
One could safely make the assertion that the number of Presbyterian country churches is legion because there is such a host of country churches. It would be quite possible for one to convince himself of this fact by first finding out the number of country churches in a few representative presbyteries. But if the question, How many Presbyterian country churches are there? is asked, a mere estimate is not sufficient.

In the first place a definition of "country" is necessary. The census report regards all towns of 2,500, or less, as "rural." For our classification of churches we have used the definition as given in the census report. At first thought this classification will appear unfair. To be sure, there is a large number of towns of not more than 2,500 people that have urban characteristics. On the other hand, many towns with a population of more than 2,500 have churches whose membership is recruited largely from rural districts. Thus a certain balance is secured.

In separating country churches from the

entire number of Presbyterian churches, the Minutes of the General Assembly for 1912 and the 1910 Report of the Census were our guide. After finding out which churches were in towns of 2,500, or less, there were remaining many churches whose addresses were unnoticed in the census report. We dared not assume that all these churches were in the open country, for might they not be in villages that were not incorporated, or in suburban towns, the inhabitants of which were included in the population of a nearby city? To make sure of the location of the churches of which we were in doubt, inquiry was made of some one whose knowledge included not only the location of certain churches, but also the conditions found in the places where these churches were located. Through cooperation with men on the field, we were able to learn which churches were found in suburban towns, as well as the ones which were located in mining, lumbering and summering places. To synodical superintendents, pastor evangelists, home missionary chairmen, stated clerks and pastors who responded so generously to our request for information, we are deeply indebted for the data furnished us by them.

Inquiry was made of some one in each presbytery. Reports were received from 269 presbyteries. These reports showed that 70.7 per



cent. of all the churches in those 269 presbyteries were country churches. Of the 6,751 country churches, 4,185, or 61.9 per cent. are in villages, and 2,261, or 33.6 per cent. are in the open country. The remaining 305, which constitute 4.5 per cent., have been abandoned. The location of the abandoned churches was given in only a few instances by those from whom inquiry was made. The fact that the names of only a few of the places where these abandoned churches were located were given in the census report, gave us reason to believe that the large majority of abandoned Presbyterian churches were found in very small villages or in the open country.

In addition to the number of country churches of our denomination, we were interested to know how many of them had the services of a minister. We learned that 4,863, which is 72.0 per cent. of the entire number of country churches in those 269 presbyteries, had a minister. 1,583, or 23.5 per cent. of them were vacant. The remaining 4.5 per cent. is accounted for by the 305 abandoned churches to which reference has been made.

Of the 4,863 country churches which had the services of a minister, 3,280 were in villages and 1,583 were in the open country. That is, 78.4 per cent. of the village churches have a minister, 21.6 per cent. have none. Of the open country churches, 70.0 per cent. have a minister, 30.0 per cent. are vacant.

Another matter in which we were interested was, How many country churches have a resident pastor? We found that 2,855 of the 4,863 churches that had a minister had him living in the parish. 74.6 per cent. of the village churches that had a minister were so fortunate as to have him residing within the parish, whereas only 25.8 per cent. of the open country churches had a resident minister. In other words, 3 out of every 4 village churches with ministerial service had a resident minister, but only one out of every 4 open country churches had a resident minister.

Not all country churches that had a minister had the privilege of all of his time. In fact many churches so favored as to have a resident minister must share him with one or more churches. Only 33.8 per cent. of all the country churches had the full time of the minister, 23.4 per cent. have one-half of his time, 10.4 per cent. have one-third and 4.5

per cent. manage to exist with one-fourth, or less, of the minister's attention.

The accompanying map shows the percentage of Presbyterian churches which are country churches. In New England there are but fifty Presbyterian churches, mainly located in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Relatively few of these are rural, as appears from the fact that Massachusetts is left blank on the map, Presbyterian organizations in that state being properly ranked as city churches. The four or five Presbyterian churches in Maine are in more important centers, and are not made the basis of any showing for that state.

In the southeast this map makes no reckoning of the organizations of the Presbyterian Church U. S. (Southern Presbyterian), but it does include the U. S. A. churches organized in the Negro Synods. The inclusion of the negro churches justifies estimating conditions in Georgia and South Carolina, whereas, the small number of white churches would leave them in the same category with the blank New England States. Louisiana is organized with the Synod of Texas in U. S. A. churches, and the small representation of our branch prompts leaving that state blank.

Further west in the south those familiar with social and economic conditions will understand how even churches reckoned as rural in New Mexico and Arizona may minister mainly to a population depending upon mining rather than agriculture. Particularly notable is that fact in the case of Nevada where a high percentage of rural churches is indicated, whereas few or none minister largely to an agricultural population.

GO, REAPER

Go, reaper,
Speed and reap,
Go take the harvest
Of the plough:
The wheat is standing
Broad and deep,
The barley glumes
Are golden now.

Labour is hard,
But it endures
Like love:
The land is yours:
Go reap the life
It gives you now,
O sunbrowned master
Of the plough!

—Seosamh MacCathmhaoil.

The Survey for Evangelism

RALPH A. FELTON

THE Presbyterian Church is putting a new emphasis on its belief that Christ came to call sinners to repentance. This new evangelism stands for a living, fervent, aggressive Christianity. It means that the Church should forget its interest in self-preservation, and should minister to the most needy among men.

The Presbyterian Church is studying the religious needs of the rural districts, and is seeking to meet these needs. This study is called a survey. The Department of Church and Country Life has undertaken several such surveys.

Last summer 19 counties of Ohio were surveyed, and a study was made of 1,515 country and village churches. Of these churches slightly less than one-third were found to be growing, while the rest were either standing still or losing ground. There is an average of ten abandoned churches to each county, making something like 800 in the entire state.

There are causes of this decline outside of the church. One is the decrease of the farm population. Another is the increase in tenantry, for the church has not learned how to reach the tenant farmer. In Butler county 41 per cent. of the farmers are tenants while only 22 per cent. of the farmers on the church roll are tenants. In some counties it was found that the church is declining because the farmers in the community do not have an adequate income to support the church.

In order that the church may evangelize the community, it must be an efficient working organization. We need to know how we can improve our methods of church administration. One of the reasons for the decline of the country church is the lack of ministers who serve only one church each. Of the churches situated in the open country covered by the survey, only 6 per cent. have ministers giving full time, 26 per cent. have ministers for half time, while the remaining 68 per cent. have one-third to one-sixth of a minister. One minister was found who was trying to serve seven churches scattered all over a county. Of the churches having a minister for full time, 60 per cent. are growing, while of those churches which have one-fourth of a minister or less, only 26 per cent.

are growing. The survey shows that evangelism suffers when part of a man is sent to do a whole man's job.

The residence of ministers is another factor in evangelism. Where there is a resident pastor, 51 per cent. of the churches are growing. Where the minister is non-resident, only 26 per cent. of the churches are growing.

This naturally means that country churches should pay more toward the salary of ministers. As a result of the findings of the Ohio Rural Life Survey, an effort is being made in a district of a certain denomination to raise the salaries of all country ministers to a minimum of \$1,000. Every member of the church in that district has been asked to contribute the proceeds of one day's work toward this raise.

The size of the membership of a church has also been found to have a bearing upon its chances for growth. Of churches with a membership of

25 or less.	2 per cent.	are growing			
26-5017	"	"	"	"
51-10034	"	"	"	"
101-15048	"	"	"	"
151-20059	"	"	"	"
200 or over	79	"	"	"	"

In order that more people may be brought into the Kingdom our smaller churches need to combine or federate.

The problem of evangelizing the rural community must be through cooperation on the part of the religious forces in the community. Hitherto each denomination has considered itself responsible for the work of evangelism regardless of the other denominations in the community, and the result has been a waste of money, time and energy. An illustration of this waste is seen in a village of 475 people in one of the best farming sections of Ohio. In this village there are five church buildings, two of which are now abandoned. Last year three of the churches (including one since discontinued) received a total of \$675 aid from home missions and from churches outside of the community. All the churches together through their divided efforts have managed to reach only one-fourth of the people in the community.

Besides affecting the Church as a whole, this work of survey has a great influence in making efficient the work of the individual minister. Too many country ministers think only of the membership of their several churches as their field, and the new recruits gathered from their annual revivals. The average country minister serves three churches. In these he preaches, on the members of these he calls, their children he baptizes and teaches in the Sunday school. Few of our country ministers have been able to serve an entire community. Parishes overlap, and members of several churches are scattered over the same neighborhood. Many people have been overlooked, and have not been reached by the revival meetings. Some of these are former members who have lost interest; some hold membership in distant churches, while some do not feel free to attend church for financial reasons. The survey maps and diagrams the parish and charts the ministers' task.

By a survey or canvass of his community the minister is given a chance to see his task in a way that he has never seen it before; sometimes he goes into homes into which no minister has ever gone. He takes the gospel to those who will not come to him. He finds out their needs, in order that the church may serve them, and in order that they may be enlisted for the service of others.

The effect upon the minister is often greater than upon the people. He is often surprised to learn of the great proportion of people in his community who have not been touched by any church. The following in-

stances illustrate what the survey has been able to accomplish toward the evangelization of the local community.

Three ministers thought that nearly everybody in their township belonged to church; but after making a house-to-house canvass, found that only ten per cent. of the people were members of any church.

One minister as a result of his canvass found a large unchurched community. He has since organized a Sunday school in a school house which has an enrollment of 60. His church in the village has discontinued its evening service in order that he may attend this Sunday school, and hold preaching services in a church that had been abandoned.

Another minister after making a survey, made a map of his community in which the houses were colored according to whether the people belonged to church or not. In this way the religious condition of the community is kept vividly before the church members, and they are able to work more intelligently and earnestly for the evangelization of the whole community.

After the survey showed that in a certain district of a hundred square miles only 3.4 per cent. of the people belonged to the churches of the district, a young minister was sent into the community, and a thriving church has since been organized.

The ministerial association of one county of Ohio is making a survey of their whole county, visiting every house, in order that they may know their problem better. Fourteen country ministers are working together on this task.



Conditions Which Affect Country Church Growth

HERMAN N. MORSE

A CHURCH was made to grow, not to stop"—if one may adapt a familiar sentence. The population in the rural districts of our older states is diminishing; changed methods of farming and an altered standard of living are responsible for that. In an average country community the membership of the churches represents not more than one-third of the population; it is often much less.

Hardly more than one-fourth of the churches in the open country and two-fifths of the village churches which minister to the open country are growing, either in numbers or efficiency. A large proportion are steadily declining. Every year scores of churches find their way into the ecclesiastical graveyard which already numbers its head-stones by the thousands—a great multitude of abandoned country churches! 800 in Ohio; 1,700 in Illinois; 750 in Missouri; so the list reads. While the country churches which are really eminent in success are few. This compels us to consider what conditions affect church growth. The difficulty seems to arise usually from one condition. The country church is facing a new situation which has arisen within two decades and which has changed the problem and hence the task of the church, both in form and in content. This has rendered the old methods of church work wholly inadequate, has put a new aspect on the problem of maintenance and made for the church a new test of success. The factors responsible for this we can only mention in brief. Rural society is passing through a period of readjustment which is affecting all the most vital processes of its life. Both the community and economy of the old type of American farmer have been disrupted and we have not yet reached the type of organization which is to replace them. The church is not an isolated institution; it is a social institution and fits into a complicated social situation. It cannot remain unaffected by the far-reaching social and economic changes which have affected its community. The type of church which satisfied the needs of the rural community of fifty years ago is no more sufficient for our changed needs than is

the type of farm implement then in use, or the type of rural school. Moreover, in a time of transition it is inevitable that old sanctions should lose power. Institutions which would survive must find new sanctions to control society.

This transition in itself constitutes a challenge to the church because of the importance to the community of the factors involved. But the church as a whole has shown itself possessed of neither the inherent strength and flexibility of organizations, the program of work, nor the necessary equipment properly to re-adjust itself and so maintain its strength unimpaired. Instances of the sort of conditions which the church has been unable properly to deal with are very near at hand. In many places an impoverished agriculture, a general increase in the standard of living, without a corresponding increase in the means to satisfy it, an increasingly uneven distribution of prosperity, the increasing predominance of the upper age classes in the country, the decay of wholesome community life and the rapid increase of tenantry on the farms. These are conditions of vital importance to the community. The average country church does not reach either the tenant or the man living nearest the poverty line to the same extent that it reaches his more fortunate brother. Social improvements, better buildings, better salaries, support of missionaries, are not possible without a constant income. The church has an uncertain future in a population of relatively few young people, with a social life approaching stagnation. The inability of the church to handle these problems is reacting strongly both upon the church and the community.

Facing such conditions, the organization of the country church in general shows a three-fold weakness. In the first place there is the lack of an adequate resident leadership. It is not only that there is a great dearth of men properly trained and equipped for ministry in a rural parish, but even more there is a dearth of men of any sort. Country churches are suffering from an extended experiment in absent treatment. The Circuit Rider built most of these churches, built them by splendid con-

secration and untiring service. But he worked under entirely different circumstances and owed his success to conditions which no longer exist in the country. He lived with the farmers; the modern minister is a town man. The churches which he built the absentee can no longer maintain. In Ohio, an average state, only six open country churches out of every hundred have resident pastors serving them on full time. Only a resident minister can have that minute and sympathetic knowledge of the local parish which is the first requisite of a successful ministry. Without it the peculiar needs of the church are to him a closed book. What has been termed "mail order preaching" is killing most country churches. The resident pastor holds the key to the situation and the future of the country church rests with him.

In order to secure this resident leadership the religious forces of the country community must be co-ordinated. This lack of co-ordination is the second great weakness. The religious forces of the country are ineffectual because scattered. An average mid-western county has about eighty country churches where a fourth of that number would be adequate; the result is small, languishing churches. The greater proportion have less than 100 members each. At least one-fourth have less than twenty-five members each. This system is wasteful and extravagant because of the needless duplication, and unsuccessful because the small church is not an efficient working unit. The great over-multiplication of small churches can mean nothing but wide-spread inefficiency. As a result the small church is almost invariably a dying proposition.

In the third place country churches suffer from too narrow a field of interests and work. "He that saveth his life shall lose it" is as true of churches as individuals. The energies of most country churches are expended largely in the effort to perpetuate their own organizations. Their work ends where it begins.

The successful country church as a rule devotes itself to everything of fundamental importance to its people. Churches which have suffered least from economic changes are those of the Amish and Mennonite type, churches which bind religion close into the vital forces in the lives of their people. A country church if it is to survive must do this. It must permit nothing good in the community to be without its sanction and influence, nothing evil to be

without its protest and resistance. The promotion of musical culture, sanitation and recreation and the condemnation of reckless, wasteful farming may well be among its most important projects.

To correct these three weaknesses, to give the church a united front, a resident leadership and a broad, adequate program will go far toward equipping it to maintain itself through change and transition and to maintain a vital religion in the country.

The generalizations made in this paper are all based upon the results of studies in country communities made by the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life. The evidence supporting them is set forth in full in these reports and may be examined there.

Lastly, the country church must recognize that it will not be possible much longer for country people to resist the strong current now running toward cooperation and organization. Everywhere cooperation is in the air. Almost every issue of the leading farm journals discusses it. Numerous conferences and conventions are being held to further it. The government is appropriating funds to advance its interests. The country church should be in on the ground floor of this reorganization, but whether or not it takes an active part, this reorganization will go on.

The Hicksite Friends' Meeting at Sandy Spring, Maryland, has for more than one hundred and fifty years been the central influence in that community's life. The result is a thoroughly religious community and a thorough community church, which cannot possibly suffer while the community remains. This is what will happen generally, if the church is the fostering agent in the reorganization of the community. What will happen if it takes no part, whatever, is in a measure problematical, but the answer is not very hard to guess.

"In a peculiar way the church is intimately related to the agricultural industry. The work and the life of the farm are closely bound together, and the institutions of the country react on that life and on one another more intimately than they do in the city. This gives the rural church a position of peculiar difficulty and one of unequalled opportunity. The time has arrived when the Church must take a larger leadership, both as an institution and through its pastors, in the social reorganization of rural life."

Rural Churches of Distinction

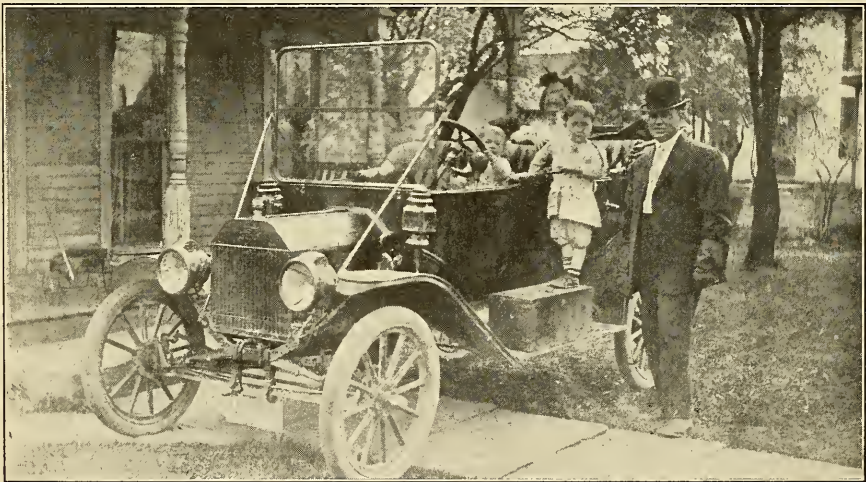
MATTHEW BROWN M'NUTT

DURING my travels the past year as Field Assistant in the Department of Church and Country Life I have had the privilege of meeting and visiting a good many rural pastors and churches in various parts of the United States. This has afforded me opportunity to study the methods employed in our country parishes. I have found some rural churches that were almost a total failure even with a pastor working sincerely and heartily; others have been strikingly successful although often not known outside the limits of a comparatively small area. In the brief space allotted to me I can describe only a few of the churches that have appealed to me as doing especially efficient and successful work.

Middle Creek

Middle Creek Church is in the open country five miles from Winnebago, Ill. It was organized fifty-eight years ago by some Presbyterians from Pennsylvania. Rev. J. S. Brad-

country schools are good, this being Prof. O. J. Kern's county. The Grange and co-operative creameries are features of the industrial life. Scientific farming has a sympathetic hearing. The young people, in goodly numbers, are attending high school, normal school, and college. Middle Creek is the only church in the community. Not all of the people go to church but this is largely a church-going community, of old American families with a sprinkling of Germans and Swedes. The summer Sunday morning congregations number 250 people. The evening congregations vary from 75 to 125, mostly young people. In both services men and boys predominate. The church building was remodeled in 1911 so as to give special rooms for Christian Endeavor, Sunday school work and social gatherings. The Sunday school has 200 members, missionary society, fifty, Westminster Circle, twenty-four members. During the winter, mission study courses are followed by the young people. The



THE REV. B. S. JONES AND FAMILY. MR. JONES IS PASTOR OF THE CHURCHES AT KEENE AND CLARK, O.

dock, D.D., was pastor for forty-two consecutive years. Rev. H. P. Armstrong is the present pastor and is in his fifth year of service. This parish is five by twelve miles in extent. It is thickly settled by prosperous farmers who are for the most part keeping step with the advance of rural civilization. The

young men and boys support a brass band and the C. E. a Lyceum Course. The present membership of the church is 152, to which frequent accessions are being made and from which there are few dismissals. The offerings last year were most encouraging, amounting to \$600.00.



THE EDGELEY JUVENILE BAND

Edgley

Edgley Church is situated in a town of 600 people in the state of North Dakota with a good farming community around it. Rev. J. C. Engel, the energetic pastor, by means of an Indian motor cycle, visits all the homes within a radius of seven miles and many others outside of this radius. He has, also, been preaching in school houses in connection with Sunday schools almost every Sunday afternoon since Christmas. His church has been co-operating with the School Superintendent of the town in conducting a Lyceum Course which has been a great success. The next move contemplated is to assist the school in placing a moving picture machine. The Methodist church of the village is also cooperating in this. Mr. Engel has organized a boys' brass band which promises to be a large factor in helping to solve the boy problem. All the religious services of this church are well sustained. Mr. Engel and his people represent a type of minister and church that are doing wonderful service in helping to mould aright the life of this new country.

The Keene-Clark Charge

These twin churches located respectively in the inland towns of Keene and Clark, Coshoc-

ton County, Ohio, nine miles apart, have been serving their communities, the one ninety-five years, the other eighty-three years. For a greater part of the time they have been linked together in one charge. The combined parish covers a strip of territory seven by eighteen miles, or 126 square miles. This is a hilly country but the soil, with careful cultivation, yields good crops. It requires watching to conserve the fertility and to keep the hills from washing. The people are home-loving folk, Scotch-Irish and German predominating. Almost every farmer owns his land, and works it. Many of the farms have been held in the same name for generations. A wholesome and satisfying social life is afforded by the various activities of the church, public school and Grange. This has done much to induce the people to remain on the farms. The village of Keene has plans ready for the immediate erection of a modern \$14,000 school building. The Duplex Envelope System was introduced in this parish a year ago, which has resulted in much increased offerings especially for benevolences. Successful revival services were held during the winter. The church at Keene last fall formed with the Methodist people a Vil-

lage Prayer Meeting Association which has successfully been carried on ever since. Its purpose is to cultivate the spirit of cooperation among the Christian people of the community and to secure more efficient service. Rural Life Institutes were held in both churches last summer under the direction of the Department of Church and Country Life. Another institute will be held this summer. Rev. B. S. Jones is the leader of this flourishing work. He lives at Keene and uses an automobile in his parish work.

Marietta and Colon

This twin parish is in Saunders County, Neb., and has a record of four decades. Marietta Church is in the open country three miles from the village of Colon, the pastor living at the country point. The rural congregation has just enlarged and remodeled its building so as to afford good Sunday school

plied chiefly by an active C. E. Society. Interest in and gifts to missions have steadily increased. Efficient growing leaders are in every organization. Special efforts are being made to help the young people and children. The membership has steadily increased and is larger now than it has been for several years. Rev. N. P. Olney is in his fourth year with this church. He attended the Summer School at Columbia, Mo., in 1912, under the auspices of the Department of Church and Country Life and says he "came home with a new vision for work in the rural churches." The Rural Department in the County Sunday School Association was created in order to give him a chance to work out the country life movement in and through the Sunday schools of the county.

Panama

The church in Panama, Neb., a village of



NO DULL TIMES HERE

and social facilities. A large majority of the families of the congregation own and work their farms. The renters are mostly sons of the owners and men of the church. The community is prosperous and progressive. Men and boys are always present in the services in large proportion. The boys' class, all church members, have a base ball team and sentiment favors a Saturday half-holiday for sports and recreations. A wholesome social life is sup-

plied chiefly by an active C. E. Society. Interest in and gifts to missions have steadily increased. Efficient growing leaders are in every organization. Special efforts are being made to help the young people and children. The membership has steadily increased and is larger now than it has been for several years. Rev. N. P. Olney is in his fourth year with this church. He attended the Summer School at Columbia, Mo., in 1912, under the auspices of the Department of Church and Country Life and says he "came home with a new vision for work in the rural churches." The Rural Department in the County Sunday School Association was created in order to give him a chance to work out the country life movement in and through the Sunday schools of the county.

church last year, thirty-four of these on profession of faith. Both the morning and evening preaching services are well attended, the audience ranging from 125 in the morning, to 175 in the evening, which number fills the church. The Department of Church and Country Life assisted in a Rural Life Institute in this community last December. The pastor, Rev. Cecil Phillips, writes concerning it, "I am very sure that the institute was a fine thing for this community, for from that time the people began to see a vision of what might be done."

In all these parishes certain things are noticeable:

These churches have resident ministers.

Special attention is given to the training of the children and youth.

Provision is made for wholesome recreation, entertainment and social intercourse.

Social service is emphasized.

Better farming is encouraged with the result that the fertility of the soil is preserved and the farmers are prospering.

There is no difficulty in raising the ministers' salaries.

The owners are being held on their farms.

These churches are serving their respective communities according to the needs of our time and are constantly growing in numerical, financial and spiritual strength as well as in efficiency.

Our Church in the Southern Mountains

O. F. WISNER

THERE is a mountain population in eight states of the South variously estimated at from 1,500,000 to 4,000,000. A century and a half of living apart has made them backward in proportion to the degree of their isolation. In occasional fertile valleys prosperity has maintained culture, comfort, and religion at a normal level. The mass of the population, however, lived in seclusion, poverty, and ignorance.

Within a generation this seclusion has been invaded by the railroad, the postman, the telegraph, and the telephone. Lumber companies have brought new ideas and new wants, and, in exchange for land, lumber, and labor, have poured a sudden stream of ready money into part of these richly timbered mountains. The mountaineer can no longer, as formerly, dispense with an income. He no longer produces everything he needs in the way of food, clothing, shelter, furniture, and implements. The loom has passed. The log cabin is being displaced by the frame cottage. The steel range, sewing-machine, and organ are coming into use. Once these people were producers of all they used, now they are consumers of other men's goods. A cash income is now a necessity, but is not yielded by unintelligent farming, on poor or exhausted land, and this makes poverty pinch today where it was not felt before. The problem is fundamentally industrial and economic, and the church which does

not show a very close connection between religion and farming can not permanently hold this field.

This, then, is the present religious situation. A new era has arrived,—an economic and social crisis, in which the life and thought of the people is immeasurably enlarged, and in which religion must have new interpretation, to show its fitness to the needs of modern life. Man here has ceased to be merely an individual, and has become a member of society. His gospel must speak to him in terms of his whole nature. If it fails to do this, it will not reach him where he is. Preachers usually live long distances from their preaching appointments. Their pay, as a matter of principle, is small or nothing, and helpful books and magazines are an impossibility. They can do little or no pastoral work. Their ministrations consist solely of preaching Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning once a month at each of four or five widely separated appointments. Such preachers cannot be expected to organize the life activities of a community about the church as a center.

As would be expected under such conditions the great mass of the people are not identified with the church. After a personal and careful study of fifteen communities in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee the writer found less than half the population on the church rolls of the twelve denominations.



A PRESBYTERIAN CENTRE

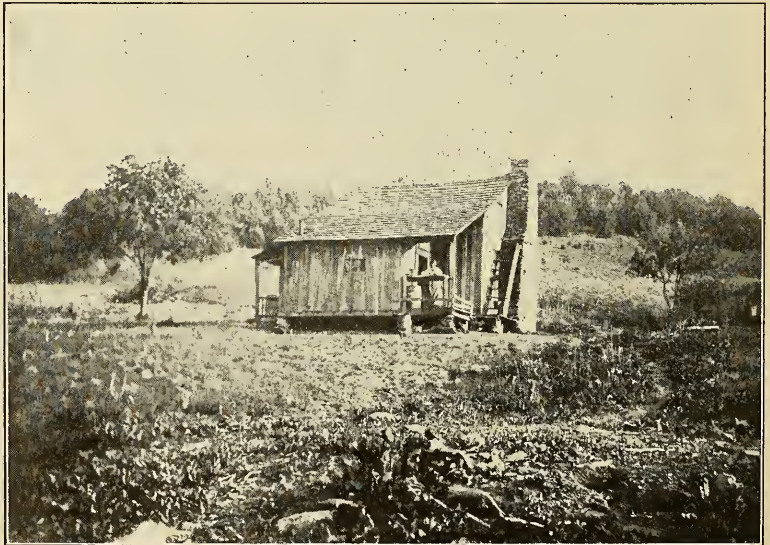
represented. In one township forty-eight per cent of the population were church members. From this high water mark the percentage fell away until low tide was reached at nine per cent! The average for the whole region was twenty-nine per cent. There is still room for evangelistic effort. The old religious forces are demonstrably unequal to the demands of the new times.

Are Presbyterians any better able to cope with the situation? In every Presbyterian congregation much effort is expended in cultivating the social and recreational life of the people through picnics, socials, and neighborhood gatherings, with a view to knitting the community together and binding it to the church. Very little of this is done by other denominations. A survey of 115 churches showed a total of eighty-five organizations

within them, other than Sunday schools, for doing Christian work. Of these fifty-five were in twenty-two Presbyterian churches, and the remaining thirty were distributed among ninety-three churches of other denominations.

We have used education as an important arm of the church's service to the community. We have a number of educated ministers devoting

their whole time to intelligent organization and direction of the church's activities. I was told by a mountaineer in surprised confidence that one of these ministers "must have a whole sled load of books." The very fact that most of them are "furiners" (i. e., do not belong to the mountains) probably enables them to see the needs of the field better than the natives can. Our church makes large use of schools. In fact most of our



A MOUNTAINEER'S HOME

churches have grown out of our schools. The Presbyterian schools have set the standard of education for this whole section of country. More than one community admittedly owes to the presence of the Presbyterians its good school, its improved community and family life, and its better organized church activities.

I stood in the central square of a county seat on court Monday and observed the crowds of people from the surrounding country as they soberly and quietly transacted the business which calls them together on those days.

and a residence. Today she has the best country school in the county, is the loved and respected leader in the community, has her dresses, her window-curtains, and her cakes copied by all the women for miles around, is the accountant and adviser of the men of the district, has been elected by them secretary and treasurer of the largest Farmers' Union in that part of the country, and has gathered about her half a hundred members of the Presbyterian church, making this branch church stronger than the main church.



FORDING

A by-standing citizen said to me, "Ten years ago you would have wanted to seek cover on such a day as this. This square was scarcely a safe place to be. Drinking, fighting, and shooting were the rule. The Presbyterians founded a school here, and now you can see how orderly and peaceable the place is."

A country community fourteen miles from the nearest village was without a school, and was rent by a feud that led men to fill their pockets with weapons even when they attended church. That was ten years ago. The Presbyterians sent a "wisp" of a young woman there to teach a day school and conduct a Sunday school. She went, and how she did it who shall say, but in six months the feud was dead, the people had subscribed labor and materials and built her a two-room school house

Presbyterians have done nothing in these mountains of which to boast. They have just touched the rim of the things that ought to be done. A body of Christian workers is demanded, who will preserve the large vision and the sweet spirit of Christ, and courageously labor on, bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring all things for the love of the Master.

The pioneer in the mountains has been the Woman's Board. Their work is still the most stimulating and the strongest influence for good. The whole Church owes a debt to the pioneer women missionaries, who invaded the mountains with spelling book in hand, to send the pastor who shall teach to a people, no longer illiterate, the gospel of the community, the nation and of the missionary kingdom of Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

Practical Evangelism for the Country Church

CLAIR S. ADAMS

WE will speak of such forms of practical evangelism as have been introduced under the inspiration of our department during the past eight months in the Salt River Presbytery, Missouri; our especial charge during this time.

The six counties making up this presbytery have lost over five per cent in population in the last ten years, and our church over twenty per cent in membership. The chief reason for this is that there are so few pastors in these churches, only ten in all. Out of the forty-two churches in the presbytery, only two have preaching every Sabbath, one has three Sabbaths out of the month, seven have preaching twice a month, and the rest once a month, or none. All these are country churches save one, twenty-four of the churches are out in the open country and the remainder in small villages and towns usually overchurched. The ministers live in the towns and cities, in some cases many miles away from their churches, which are like "sheep without a shepherd." Quoting from the survey of Rev. Anton T. Boisen taken a year ago of this presbytery, "the nine ministers who serve the country churches use up each month twenty-one days in getting back and forth to their appointments" not only time wasted but money, since "five of the ministers pay out \$175 a year for traveling expenses to their churches," a sure case of "running to and fro in the earth." But worse than all else, no pastors; and an absentee ministry is as unprofitable to the soul as absentee ownership is to the soil. There is probably no presbytery in our Church where there is such a church decline, and yet here is a fine, generous people, ready and willing for leadership. We give these details that you may know the condition with which we have to deal.

We began this part of our department work in the presbytery by holding evangelistic services with seven of the churches, or as long as good roads continued and farmers were not too busy. Six of these churches were in the open country. One hundred and fifty-two services were held with seventy-one decisions for Christ, fifty-eight of these uniting with our

churches, thirty of them being heads of families and nineteen new families being brought into our church membership. Most delightful social and community fellowship was strengthened and the churches encouraged.

We have emphasized this part of our plan, for the whole purpose of our department is to bring our country people to realize that bringing men into the Christian life is the first and greatest business of the church. After this has been done other work for the upbuilding of the community must be added, for religion consists not alone in the worship of God in a one-room building once a month.

The finances of a church are generally sensitive subjects, but we are readjusting these and placing the churches on the budget plan, and introducing the duplex envelopes as fast as we can. The once-a-month churches have paid the highest salaries for preaching; too high, in fact, for what they have received. Three hundred dollars a year is often paid for this fractional service (revival of two weeks thrown in) with no pastoral work, and no institution or direction of church organizations. Several woman's missionary societies have been organized and the young people are also finding an outlet for their activities in newly organized societies of various kinds. One of the best things we are doing in our ministry is holding Farmers' Institutes, meeting in the churches. Seven of these meetings have been conducted within the past few months. The first meeting of this kind held in the state, under the direction of the church, was in this presbytery in connection with this movement. There are usually several speakers, Board of Agriculture men, teachers and ministers; so that we can present the four leading departments of rural uplift, viz., the farm, the home, the rural school, and the church. Thus we bind the factors of the rural life problem together in sympathy and cooperation, with the Church instituting and directing it all, her rightful position, since she is to spiritualize the material, and touch all the "whatsoever ye do" of life. Usually our institutes have been held for a day in each church, beginning with a morning session of about two

hours, then a basket dinner for everybody in the church or on the grounds; a fine social leaven for any community. In the afternoon about three hours is given to speaking and conference; schools in the neighborhood being dismissed and meeting with us; then the addresses in the evening. Just to show how much interest such meetings arouse, this past April we held four such institutes in the busiest time of spring work, the week of oat-sowing, yet we had an average attendance at each church of eighty-five. All these meetings are opened with devotional services, and religion is presented in a large way, irrespective of denominational lines, so that farmers see that salvation not only concerns the souls of men, but also the soil from whose bountiful gifts mankind lives. This larger conception lifts the minds of men Godward, and "the man with the hoe" becomes a co-worker with our Father in heaven. Already we can see a more responsive spirit towards the church, on the part of non-church-members, as they catch this larger conception of the ministry of the Church, than just the praise and worship of a Sabbath day.

A Boy Scouts organization in one of our groups, directed by one of our department pastors has rallied the boys of the community, and already a camp has been held with great success, and larger plans for the coming year are being enthusiastically entered into. In another rural church, a traveling library has been secured from our State Library Commission, and the people thus have the advantage of the reading of good modern books.

Preliminary steps have been taken towards the organization of various societies in several other communities, as activities of the church's life.

We must not forget to mention the school house preaching that one of our pastors is doing on Sabbath afternoons, out from his town church with the greatest acceptance by the country people. This pastor already has three of these outstations, in districts that are far removed from other churches, and it is

his purpose to tie these places to the town church, and make this work permanent. This kind of service has the "Go ye into all the world" ring to it, that cannot but build up God's kingdom.

These activities of our churches out in Missouri may seem unimportant to some, but when we remember they are being introduced into communities where the Church stood only for once-a-month preaching, and with



BLESSED BY PRESBYTERIAN INFLUENCE

scarcely any life except the annual two weeks' revival, where denominationalism is still rampant, and preachers do not live with their people, where economic conditions are largely back in the pioneer period, where the population is decreasing and the churches discouraged and dying; then we can see what larger meaning these forms of service have to the communities in which we are introducing them, and what a higher and more helpful vision of the place God means His Church to have in her ministry to the world.

Results of Special Training

ANNA B. TAFT

THERE are two impressive facts that stand out clearly to those who come closely in touch with the work of country ministers. The first is the splendid consecration, sacrifice and tireless labor invested in this form of Christian service. The second is, that failure to build an efficient church in the country lies in large measure, so far as the pastor is concerned, in a lack of knowledge of the problem and the want of clear vision as to the possibilities of the country church.

To help live country ministers to be masters of their problem the Department of Church and Country Life has held each summer Post Graduate Courses for Country Ministers in cooperation with Summer Schools of distinction. No part of the Department's work is so inspiring as this for those who serve under it, for no other brings such quick and graphic returns. Nearly 400 country ministers, selected on the basis of their possibilities for leadership, have been brought to these Summer Schools during the past three years.

A letter was recently sent to about fifty of these ministers who had had at least a year's work since attending the summer school, asking what results in their work were directly traceable to the summer school. The response was so generous and hearty that it is impossible in the limits of this brief article to give more than a few short extracts from the letters received. A minister from Pennsylvania writes:

"My attendance upon the summer schools of the Department of Church and Country Life has been of great advantage to me as an

inspiration and as a means of acquiring knowledge and receiving suggestions. Being in a very much overchurched community, with Presbyterianism not strong enough to dominate, I have not been able to follow my ideal; but I have sought to preach the old Gospel in terms of country life; and my people have in various ways testified that my preaching has very much improved. In fact this testimony has been so strong that, if I had no personal

desire to attend the coming session of this school at Auburn, I should have hesitated to remain away lest I should not be able to satisfy them in the future. In addition to my preaching here, I have by sermons in other pulpits and at Grange Harvest Home Services, by addresses at Sunday school



COUNTRY PASTORS AT A SUMMER SCHOOL

Conventions, and by articles in our local newspaper sought to awaken a new interest in the country church by calling attention to the sacredness of agriculture and the dependence of the Church on its prosperity and to the larger opportunity for evangelism through the church's taking an interest in the whole life of the people. Of course this has been largely sowing seed where I could not expect to reap the harvest; but I have had some evidence that it did not all fall on stony ground. Whatever I have done I have been led to chiefly by my attendance at Auburn."

Another minister from the same state says:

"As one of the country ministers who attended the summer school at Auburn Seminary, July, 1912, I am glad to say that this school had and is having a direct, positive influence in furthering the work in my field. The splendid instruction, the interchange of

experiences and the splendid fellowship, all combine in communicating that impression which is so necessary to the country pastor that he is not working alone but is working with others who are trying to meet the same problems.

"It is my opinion that nothing in recent times has been so helpful to the country minister as these summer schools and Country Life Conferences."

Another contribution from Pennsylvania comes from a man who is not at present a country pastor, but holding a home mission position in his presbytery. He writes:

"The opportunity I have had for testing the value of the summer conferences has been an unusual one. I was fortunate enough to be present at the first of these which was held in connection with the Home Mission Board, and have found it to be specially helpful in the following ways:

"In giving a clear vision of what the movement really means.

"Those who have never attended any of these conferences can form no idea of their inspirational value in this direction. I had been a student of the problems of the country church before, but the lectures and discussions at the conference gave me a much better conception of what these problems are, and how they should be handled.

"In formulating in a definite and concise program those lines of activity which need to be emphasized in the life and work of the country church.

"Such a program has been of inestimable worth to me, and has been adopted by the presbytery. It has been successfully appealed to again and again in defense of the methods which the presbytery has used, and has been a most effective instrument in securing aggressive and concerted action."

So many ministers from New York state who have had the exceptional advantage of attending the Auburn Summer School of Theology wrote in response to our inquiry that it is possible to quote from only a few.

"Personally, the summer school brought me a greatly enlarged vision of the possibilities open to me and my people, and so, of course, a new and increased sense of responsibility. It showed me that some things *must* be attempted, which before had not appeared as part of my pastoral work, and it showed to some extent, how to tackle those jobs."

Another minister says:

"I believe the Board of Home Missions has done wisely, to seek to help the church through this training of workers and suggestions of the best methods."

Again we have this word:

"As neither my university nor seminary gave courses in "Country Life," I had no opportunity of studying the subject. But when I entered the summer school I began to see things in a new light. The least I can say is that Dr. Wilson gave me a vision of what a minister may be and do in a country community. To a very large degree it is his program I am following in my work."

From New Jersey a country pastor writes:

"Let me say a word concerning the value of the summer school. I attended a summer school three years ago and found it to be of great inspirational value to me. I was at that time at work upon the problems of the country church and of the country community, and the contact with others who were engaged in the same work encouraged me greatly to develop and enlarge the scope of the work already begun."

A country minister from Ohio, doing exceptionally fine work, writes:

"I could write eloquently of the new inspiration that came to me as a result of my attendance at the summer school at Grove City,—one of the new sense that we country preachers were being recognized in our work, of a new discovery that our work was important in larger ways than we had realized, of a new affection for the Church that was possessed of the love and statesmanship to get us together and encourage us in a new and broader understanding of our country problem, a new prayer for all the country fields, a new intelligence in regard to books on country life and successful forms of country work in various places."

Another from the same state says:

"I have never had such conceptions of church work before. I had never followed and studied as I have the past three years. It is far greater delight to attempt to do the work of a community seeing that according to this *new way* I can make my church and thus my own labors contribute to the welfare of the whole community as I had never conceived of doing before."

All of our summer schools have not been in the East. In 1912 and again in 1913 we have

had a summer school at Estes Park, Colorado, in connection with the Y. M. C. A. Conference. One of the students at this summer school says briefly and right to the point: "I received inspiration and information and then used it. I spent much of my time in personal work and the response was very gratifying."

A LIST OF BOOKS

Recommended by the Department of Church and Country Life

- Anderson, Wilbert L.** The Country Town. Baker Taylor Co.
- Ashenurst, J. O.** The Day of the Country Church. Funk & Wagnalls Co.
- Bailey, L. H.** The Country Life Movement. The Macmillan Co.
- Bailey, L. H.** Nature Study Idea. The Macmillan Co.
- Bailey, L. H.** Outlook to Nature. The Macmillan Co.
- Bailey, L. H.** The State and the Farmer. The Macmillan Co.
- Beard, A. F.** The Story of John Frederick Oberlin. The Pilgrim Press.
- Butterfield, Kenyon L.** Chapters in Rural Progress. University of Chicago Press.
- Butterfield, Kenyon L.** The Country Church and the Rural Problem. University of Chicago Press.

- Carver, T. N.** Principles of Rural Economics. Ginn & Co.
- Coulter, J. E.** Co-operation Among Farmers. Sturgis & Walton.
- Foght, H. W.** The American Rural School. The Macmillan Co.
- Haggard, H. Rider.** Rural Denmark and Its Lessons. Longmans & Co.
- Kern, O. J.** Among Country Schools. Ginn & Co.
- McKeever, W. A.** Farm Boys and Girls. The Macmillan Co.
- Plunkett, Sir Horace.** The Rural Life Problem of the United States. The Macmillan Co.
- Taft, Anna B.** Community Study for Country Districts. Missionary Education Movement.
- Van Hise, C. R.** The Conservation of the Natural Resources in the United States. The Macmillan Co.
- Wilson, Warren H.** The Church of the Open Country. Missionary Education Movement.
- Wilson, Warren H.** Quaker Hill. Privately Printed.
- Wilson, Warren H.** The Evolution of the Country Community. The Pilgrim Press.
- Country Life.** Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.
- Report of the Country Life Commission.** Sturgis & Walton.
- Carney, Mabel.** Country Life and the Country School. Row, Peterson and Company.
- Fiske, George Walter.** The Challenge of the Country. Association Press.
- Gill, Charles O. and Pinchot, Gifford.** The Country Church. The Macmillan Company.
- Gillette, John M.** Constructive Rural Sociology. Sturgis and Walton Company.
- MacDougall, John.** Rural Life in Canada. The Westminster Company, Toronto.



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